

**Governor's Rural Affairs Council
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2016
Illinois Department of Agriculture Building, State Fair Grounds
Springfield, Illinois**

- 1. The meeting was called to order by Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti at 11:04 a.m.**
- 2. Roll Call**

Member Agencies Present

Community College Board, Karen Hunter Anderson
Illinois Department of Aging, Burt Weber
Illinois Department of Agriculture, Rebecca Clark
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, Director Sean McCarthy and Wendy Bell
Illinois Department Employment Security, Shelly Tweedy and Jeff Fulgenzi
Illinois Department of Human Services, Francisco Alvarado
Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Wayne Rosenthal
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Amy Walkenback
Illinois Department Public Health, Don Jones
Illinois Housing Development Authority, Bill Pluta
Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Chris Merrett
Illinois Finance Authority, Patrick Evans
Illinois Department Transportation, Rich Bauer
Illinois Agriculture Association (Farm Bureau), Brenda Matherly
Rural Partners, Blanche Shoup
Southern Illinois University, Kim Sanders

Not attending: Illinois State Board of Education, University of Illinois Extension.

Citizen Members Present:

Luke Allen
Heather Hampton Knodle
Doug Hanks
Sonja Reece
Larry Richards

Citizen Members Absent:

Todd Kaeb

Nonvoting Members Present

Norman Walzer, NIU

Nonvoting Members Present

Colleen Callahan

Lt. Governor's Office Present:

Evelyn Sanguinetti, Kaitlin Wilhite; Susan Wynn Bence, Ennedy Rivera, Brian Costin

Quorum determined.

- 3. Motion to amend the agenda, to remove item 7, which will be discussed at the next meeting. A motion to approve was made and seconded/Motion Carried**

Lt. Governor Sanguinetti welcomed the council members and guests to the quarterly meeting. She congratulated the working groups for their efforts, and shared highlights from her travels since the last meeting. She thanked Director Raymond Poe for an invitation to visit the Department of Agriculture and reported that she had toured the Chicago Board of Trade and Mercantile Exchange during the Annual Pork Tour. She reported that she had also been invited to speak at the Midwest Dairy Council meeting, to provide an overview of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, where she highlighted the priorities of the working groups and the summer meals program. She also attended the Future Farmers of America Convention, giving the welcome address to more than 3,000 members and alumni from across the state. She thanked Citizen Member Luke Allen for helping to arrange the opportunity.

- 4. Approval of May 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Motion passed to approve.**

- 5. Motion to approve Working Group Meeting Minutes for all meetings held since the last full council meeting. Proposed amendments include:** Heather Hampton Knodle/Economic Development clarified reference to the database availability mentioned in the previous meeting. **Motion to approve minutes and amendments made/Motion Carried**

- 6. Working Group Summary Update:** 4 main focus areas for next 12 months, including:

Economic Development – support for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and agri-businesses. *Co-Chairs: Todd Kaeb (absent), Heather Hampton Knodle.*

Hampton Knodle Reported: We would like to create a portal, or umbrella to gather the various resources available.

Item 1) She suggested that the existing resource guide should be updated annually.

Item 2) It was also suggested that the Department of Commerce be the “front door” to economic development in the state. Discussion included ways to incorporate and streamline other agency programs, such as the Department of Transportation adopting a program for rails, and dovetailing a grant accountability website. She reported that they are looking for ways to empower the existing regional economic development team and emphasizing locally led community plans, both for economic and community development. Tapping into university programs such as the College of Business at U of I is another approach, since there is planning available for individual businesses to provide tools. This will prepare them to compete for grants and program dollars.

Item 3) Tiered experiences with the Workforce Development group was also discussed, providing the example of the Peoria area, where the USDA convened a session with the Peoria

Economic Development entity, and invited both state and federal program managers to speak. The Peoria Economic Development entity then worked with various businesses within their region to make presentations of their priorities to the program managers. It worked well and there are presently efforts to replicate the event in the Quincy area.

Workforce Development includes identification of emerging workforce needs in rural communities and the development of targeted training programs designed to meet those needs. *Co-Chairs: Norm Walzer and Doug Hanks.*

Walzer reported: This group is looking across the country for best practices and manufacturing/for rural areas.

Item 1) He suggested development of an awards recognition program for high school robotics, possibly at the state fair.

Item 2) He reported that they wanted to meet with some rural workforce board directors to determine which issues they would like to have examined; Blanche Shoup compiled a preliminary survey which is presently being reviewed, and will be conducted at the state level.

Item 3) Jim Nelson with IMA is working with them to determine best practices in manufacturing and for truck drivers in particular. They are examining workforce readiness and career counseling at the regional level. They are also looking at how to link the economic development and workforce development working groups to avoid training students for presently existing employment opportunities that may not be in existence in the future. They have also been working with IDDS to find some data regarding the labor force participation rate of older people in rural areas, which has been high. If the stock market improves and they leave the workforce, it could be problematic. The group is trying to project what may happen in 3-5 years, in terms of what types of training may be needed.

Item 4) Hanks added that there is a need to focus on elementary level children and finding ways to encourage them to work in agriculture, manufacturing, and technology. He shared an ad campaign developed by Carl Sandburg (*Start Here/Work Here*) and suggested that the Lt. Governor's office and the IIRA could work with local community colleges to help them find ways to promote what is available through workforce. Shoup noted that they have been working to develop regions, to create plans and coordinate efforts with community colleges. She suggested that campaigns need to be ongoing and focus on the growth in these employment areas, to encourage parents that it is okay for their children to pursue these types of careers.

Health – Co-chairs: Sonja Reece and Larry Richards

Item 1) Reece discussed issues of emergency medical services in rural Illinois. She shared a story about an individual living in Polk County who had a heart attack, and had to wait for an ambulance that was 90 miles away. Although they have people trained for emergency services, they have no ambulance. It was pointed out that EMS is not considered an essential service at state level, resulting in fragmentation of services throughout the state. There is a 9-1-1 infrastructure in place in every county and they have learned that they can go through the Fire Marshall to get 0 interest loans to purchase emergency vehicles. They plan to contact Don Moffett as this may need to be addressed through legislation.

Item 2) Don Jones shared a survey result indicating that in 2014 there were 172k registered nurses in Illinois, with 40% of them in the age group of 55-65. Of those surveyed, 40% reported that they plan to retire within the next 5 years. We will lose 68k nurses with experience and knowledge. In communities with populations of less than 25k, there is already a significant shortage. There is also an issue within the behavioral health segment, particularly in rural areas. A map highlighting the deficit areas was presented, indicating that the shortage affects many professional levels, from psychiatrists to school counselors, and that it can indicate that there is either a general shortage or a shortage for a subset such as the uninsured, Medicaid/Medicare recipients, etc. A program was implemented in 2011 to incentivize going into practice in deficit areas, such as loan deferment.

Item 3) Kim Sanders reported that SIU School of Medicine has ramped up care in the last 6 to 12 months, providing advanced care in more than 15 specialty areas, including allergy care, pulmonary medicine, dermatology, and pediatrics. Pittsfield, Pinckneyville, and Benton are among those really benefitting. She referred people to either look at the SIU website or phone Nina Antoniotti at 217-545-3830 to inquire about procuring Telehealth & Outreach Services for communities.

Item 4) She also discussed the Lt. Governor's 3rd Annual EMS Summit held April 8th, which attracted more than 130 registrants, and featured a national speaker, Gary Wingrove who addressed community para-medicine. It has proven to be very cost-effective in managing elderly and patients with multiple conditions. The American Health Association, Illinois Rural Health Association, Paramedic Association of Illinois, Ambulance Association, SIU School of Med, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Farm Bureau, and the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, et al helped to sponsor the event.

Questions/Comments: Jack Fleeharty, Division Chief for Illinois Emergency Medical Services and Highway Safety attending the Health WG this past month and referred to a report indicating that EMS issues must be solved at the local level, and suggested that Fire Districts analyze which resources are available locally. He also suggested that services be consolidated to conserve resource dollars, in terms of aligning administrative structures, attorney fees.

7. Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity - Acting Director Sean McCarthy

Item 1) He reported that Illinois DCEO is the lead economic development agency, working to create and retain jobs by working with existing businesses to expand and attracting new businesses and also international companies, to attract foreign investment. They also support small businesses and entrepreneurs to develop a competitive work force and promote Illinois' as a world class destination for tourism and the film industry. This is especially important for the rural communities who have experienced a slower recovery than Chicago and the collar counties. The highest unemployment rates occur in some of the rural counties. There are nine programs and many of them directly target rural economic development, including the Office of Business Development and Team Red, (the Regional Economic Development teams) which work directly with businesses to help them remain and grow in Illinois. One challenge is how to keep businesses, when many of them can drastically reduce costs by moving to a neighboring state.

These teams work as one coordinated program and operate as an outreach unit to work directly with businesses, to help them remain in the communities. He reported that they have eight people in ten regions: Team Red is comprised of our representatives and are great advocates, because they are from the local communities and are familiar with the needs and challenges within each community. They also help to facilitate collaboration between state, regional, and municipal government and businesses, assuring that all key players are involved from the outset of a project. They are one of the best resources regarding how the department can assist with opportunities and can connect with other state agencies, such as IDOT, foreign trade, etc.

Item 2) The Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Technology supports the SBDCs and is currently developing an online, “one stop shop” portal to provide a resource to those who may be considering starting a business in Illinois. This will provide information on permits and licensing and also connects to SBDC websites.

Item 3) The Office of Trade and Investment provides export support and organizes overseas conferences for trade. There are ten foreign offices worldwide to attract foreign investment in Illinois, and there are approximately 2000 foreign firms in Illinois. They locate here to benefit from our workforce as well as our central location and transportation network, providing them access to the North American market.

Item 4) The Office of Community Development administers the federal community development block grants, helping communities to fund public infrastructure, housing and economic development projects. Last year 37 communities received more than 14 million dollars to help update infrastructure, such as water, sanitary and storm sewer projects, and other infrastructure that helps communities to attract new companies to their area. These grants also created 90 jobs in non-metro Illinois. Sixteen million dollars was also provided to bring housing up to code. This office also manages grants in times of natural disasters to assist with recovery.

Item 5) The Office of Energy Assistance manages the low income heating assistance program, which is a federal program. Weatherization services are also available to low income households. We also have

Item 6) The Department of Employment and Training provides support for employees impacted by layoffs. It also administers Workforce Development programs and authors the statewide development plan. A major concern voiced by employers is regarding the skills gap—to address this, there is an effort to implement employer-driven workforce development and facilitating collaboration between educators, workforce boards, and employers, to assure that students are being trained for “in demand” careers, such as the program for Illinois manufacturing. Accelerated Training for Illinois Manufacturing (AIM) offers industry-recognized education designed to place qualified individuals into skilled manufacturing jobs, which is key to attracting employers.

Item 7) The Office of Energy and Recycling supports companies interested in improving competitiveness through implementation of energy and waste management best practices, and also provides basic grants for solar and wind energy projects.

Item 8) The Office of Film, Supporting Film, Television, and Commercial Industries in Illinois manages projects incorporating Illinois as a base of operation. Although many projects are shot in Chicago, the film *Field of Dreams* shot a scene in Galena.

Item 9) The Office of Tourism markets the tourism and hospitality industries in Illinois, which generates a \$125 million impact for rural Illinois.

Questions posed: Chris Merrett asked when the funds for SBDC that have been frozen due to the budget impasse might be released. **Reply:** There were no general revenue funds attached to the stop gap budget. Norm Walzer asked if there are any programs designed to help downtown development projects. **Reply** Due to the budget stalemate, there are not grant funding options, but there are financing options. HUD funds are available for infrastructure improvements. There are mostly federal financing programs that are available for rural areas. Heather Hampton Knodle asked how the Illinois Business Economic Development Corporation works. **Reply** It is a private nonprofit so there are no state funds. Legislation for revising public-private partnerships was stalled during its review, so this organization is currently strictly funded privately, and is trying to find jobs and generate leads. DCEO is currently working on a business retention program with Ameren and Illinois Economic Development Corporation and IDEA to coordinate a business retention program along with local partners.

8. Education – Co-chairs: Lucas Allen and Chris Merrett –

Item 1) Expansion of the CEO program has been one of the goals. Program administrators have been contacted and will be meeting with Illinois Agriculture teachers at the Agriculture Teacher Professional Development Conference this winter. The partnership with FFA and the entrepreneurial program is moving forward on schedule.

Item 2) The teacher shortage poses a significant challenge to rural areas. One example is a rural school in Northeast Illinois that has had an opening for a Spanish teacher posted for 4 months with no qualified applicant inquiries. Even in areas with higher pay there is a struggle to fill posts, due to competition with urban posts. A solution is being sought through a partnership with Illinois Vision 20/20, which is a collaboration of all school leadership from K-12. One of the issues they are addressing involves unfunded state mandates, such as the requirement of having a doctor or registered nurse on staff to determine when a student may be able to return to class, in the event of a sports-related injury. This rule pertains also to injuries incurred away from school and school events, suggesting that even if the student sustains an injury at home, they must be cleared by the school team before returning to school.

9. Annual Report Discussion

Chris Merrett summarized the draft, saying that the Table of Contents on page 4 provides an outline of the contents in the draft. The first part includes a section called “Defining Rural Illinois” and “Changing Conditions of Rural Illinois” which follows the structure of the GRAC and provides the organizational approach for the document. Merrett requested that everyone please review this section, assure that your agency has been represented accurately and submit any corrections. The GRAC Working Group activities submitted have also been incorporated and summaries do indicate (as suggested earlier by Walzer) that there are overlaps in efforts of all three working groups. For example, the Health Working Group has been focused on nursing shortages, a skills gap for technology employees, a shortage of

teachers. He suggested that the example of the Vermont-Ipava-Table Grove school district's inability to fill a science teaching post for 3-4 months will eventually become a Workforce issue, if we don't have skilled teachers educating the students. Data has also been included from the Workforce plan, discussing occupational projections. On page 31 for example, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board data application from Washington earlier this year has been included. In the Appendix on page 44, information from DCEO regarding a master planning document developed in 2014 discusses location quotients (IQ) by region, indicating where different regional areas may have specializations, for example. In regarding to the discussion of how Workforce Development interacts with education, page 45-46 includes a map illustrating A.P. exam participation, showing that the trend is based on the distance from Chicago, and reflecting the likelihood that a 12th grade student will have taken the exam decreases in conjunction with an increased distance. The following map indicates the number of students who have achieved a score of three or above, which predicts college performance. This was included in the report to highlight the quality of rural schools, which limits the exposure to the types of courses that will prepare the students to pursue higher education, and ultimately gives an indication of the level of training the workforce will achieve. Students in rural areas need to have opportunities and access to A.P. courses by K6, if we want to have a skilled workforce in the future. Suggestions on formatting and editing are welcome and encouraged up through the middle of next week, when the document will be in the final stages of formatting.

Comments: Lt. Governor Sanguinetti said that she would like to add an Executive Summary and make some organizational changes in the next few days. She suggested a short meeting be held on July 26th at 11:00 a.m. to discuss these items.

10. New Business:

2016 GRAC Meeting Dates

- i. 11/15 Springfield - Illinois Department of Agriculture, State Fair Grounds – 11AM

11. Upcoming events

- i. Illinois State Fair, August 11-21, 2016
- ii. DuQuoin State Fair, August 26-September 5
- iii. Farm Progress Show, Boone, Iowa, August 30-September 1

12. Member Updates and Reports

Karen Hunter Anderson, Executive Director of the Illinois College Board reported that they are working with the Governor's office to submit a grant to America's Promise, the job driven program sponsored by the White House. This program will identify areas with a high workforce need and provide community colleges with funds to cover tuition. There are two pathways: I.T. and Business. They are looking at the data to determine high needs areas, and have identified rural Southern Illinois.

Blanche Shoup of Rural Partners reported that their Board of Directors meeting was held Tuesday, and Norm Walzer and Susan Wynn Bence participated. Activities within GRAC were discussed, and how partnerships can be formed.

Luke Allen reported that the new Illinois plan for agriculture education was adopted. The goal is to assure that K12 teachers, community college professors, and university professors are all acquainted. The Illinois plan brings everyone together and incorporates Workforce Development and community education, to educate the consumer regarding their food sources. Also, legislation was passed with the help of Senator Cunningham. Senate Bill 29.75 allows Illinois Agriculture education to be listed as a high need area, which in turn allows federal level support for loan forgiveness to apply to Agriculture teachers. It also provides for teacher salary increases. Although the money has not been identified yet, the system is in place. This year over 30,500 students took Agriculture classes statewide.

Francisco Alvarado of the Department of Human Services reported that his department supports various vocations and trains their vocational and guidance counselors to focus on sector trends, to be able to offer the most current information.

Rebecca Clark of the Department of Agriculture is seeking judges and participants for Senior Day and Veteran's Day events at the Illinois State Fair. She also invited everyone to Agriculture Day.

Amy Walkenbach of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will be submitting their 2017 grant application to U.S.E.P.A. to request infrastructure program funding for low interest loans to improve wastewater and public water supplies.

11. Public Comments

None made

12. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made/Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:59 pm.